high value placed upon conformity to rules governing authority relations makes Bedouin society of al-Qasr less individualistic than, for instance, the Iatmul of New Guinea who "set no exaggerated value upon extremely orderly behavior" (Bateson 1958:31). Social cohesion in al-Qasr is sustained through what Durkheim called "mechanical solidarity."

The Bedouin father is in a disciplinary position over his washuun, his wife (wives) and his children. (The word, washuun, must be of Berber origin for I am unable to trace it in Arabic.) Although the father has the right to beat his washuun, the Bedouins say that he does so "only in rare cases, when it is necessary." During my time in the field I heard of no physical punishment being dealt out by a father.

The dyadic relationship of father and son roles is the focal field of authority in the family. The pattern of behavior in this relationship is marked typically by restraint on the part of the son. The father orders and the son obeys unquestioningly. If the father accidentally uses a taboo word, such as 'ammar which in standard Arabic means "to fill" but in the Bedouin dialect means "to have sexual intercourse," the son will immediately depart the scene in a high state of embarrassment. In this way, the boy is not only excluded from gatherings and activities in which his father participates, but he is also made to maintain a respectable social distance from his father's age-set. There are other ways of

593 [207] [177] During the present time when most of the Bedouins own a transistor radio, a son will not even listen to songs or poetry broadcast over the air if his father is within hearing distance. I once witnessed a well-meaning father try unsuccessfully to get his ten year old son to sit down and listen with him to the news on the radio. This automatic deference paid to the father 593 •561 is extended to all male elders: the father-son relationship is the model for authority relations between generations. [276] But there are degrees in which the model is applied to behavior; for instance, a boy will not smoke in front of his older brother, his uncles and grandfather, but will feel no uneasiness about smoking in the company of an elder with whom he has no immediate authority relationship.

593 The filial piety which marks the father-son authority relationship is owed to the father until his death. As the son grows older, he may show a little less constraint but he still plays the role of the subordinate. For example, I never saw a son argue with his father over anything during my stay in the field, with one serious exception. One man who had broken off friendly relations with his brother objected to the presence of his brother's sons at the wedding of his own daughter. When he threatened to cause a public scene to embarrass his nephews before the other guests, his own sons defended the right of their cousins to be at their sister's wedding. They told their father that his quarrel

kin groups of the parent who does not determine descent. A corollary aspect of the filiation principle in al-Qasr is the practice of collaterally extending the term, khal, to include many others besides the real mother's brother. This usage of classificatory terminology, like that in the case of bint 'amm, leads to confusion for the fieldworker. When an individual marries into an outside group, or even within the secondary group, the wife's brother becomes khal not only to the offspring of the marriage, but to all the children (awlad) at the same generation level as the offspring. All boys of the age of sister's son will refer to his mother's brother as khali ("my mother's brother"). Besides extending the web of kinship, this practice also has the function of uniting age-mates of the local descent group.

Throughout this discussion of mother's brother, I have been stressing the fact that the sentiment which a Bedouin develops toward this person is to be construed as a political value, i.e., a behavioral disposition relevant to the political process. It is patent then that the sister's son-mother's brother relationship should be more crucial in exogamous marriages, for in these cases cognation becomes the principal mechanism for establishing authority relations and effecting political alliance. In endogamous marriages, cognation complements the other structural principles which define the corporate group, and makes it the corporate group par excellence.

554 It would be considered "wrong" for the members of
571 this group to present themselves at an al-Qasr wedding party,
[599] or the annual celebration held in honor of a local saint of
[585] the area. When I inquired about the conspicuous absence of
[796] some of my chief informants from such gatherings, I was told
[124] that "they will send their gifts," or that "it is not decent
[431] that they come to something such as this." In terms of
554 Bedouin social structure, there are a number of plausible
571 explanations for this "status separation." Fathers should
182 not attend public affairs at which their sons may be "per-
561 forming," i.e., young men should be allowed to play a public
[593] role outside the confines of the father-son authority structure. By virtue of the extension of the father role, and its corresponding authoritarian attitude, every member of the elder age-set commands certain rights and obligations which would prevent the free expression that is the hallmark of Bedouin parties. Conversely, and at the more general level, members of the "status group" who wish to remain members of this circle accept certain restrictions on social
[114] intercourse. At the five different Bedouin "parties" which I attended, there were "elders" present, but none of them could be classified as members of the "status group." Bedouins plainly state that elders should not attend parties, but, on the other hand, they show much more concern and emotion when they say that a member of the "status group" should not "be

554 seen" at any such function. It would appear that the mechanism
571 at work here is not simply a device to provide the younger
182 generation with a tension-release situation, but also a
•561 symbolic expression of the difference between the possessors
[154] and the non-possessors of authority, a confirmation of the political order.

[598] The avoidance practice, or separation, between the old and the young in the "party" situation is a structural fact of Bedouin society, and, though it may ultimately be defined as a conflict control or legitimating mechanism, in the context of culture change new aspects and meanings attach
554 to the phenomenon. The "status group" is an agent of change
571 in al-Qasr; its members can afford to gamble in the market
178 economy of Marsa Matruh since they possess the reserve capital
[471] (in the form of sheep) and the social prestige which permits
[439] this. The "status group," with business and social relations
[177] in Marsa Matruh, enjoys both the benefits of associational ties with the Egyptians and the communal ties with their fellow Bedouins. They see themselves as being different from their fellow tribesmen, and they tend to face more towards Marsa Matruh than al-Qasr. In short, they are the "cultural brokers" who support an ideology of change, they extol the benefits of a new way of life over and against the old.

[789] One repudiation of tradition which constitutes an
[796] attempt to define the style of life of the "status group"

554 The rajal khair, then, is a broker in social relation-
571 ships, a manipulator of loyalties. As a member of the "status
627 group," he can afford to spend time and money in courting his fellow tribesmen, and, as a result, can accrue prestige and loyalty. This role, like that of the 'aqila, is a secular
[681] one. The sanctions which it controls are as economical as those of the 'aqila's are political. In this sense, they are differentiated from the role of rajal saalih whose sanctions are sacred in nature.

554 The traditional role which we define as that of the
792 rajal saalih, "the holy man," was probably much more important
[178] in the past than it is today. In al-Qasr, there are only two rajal saalih who share in traditional power: the one is a resident of al-Qasr proper, and the other, a member of the prestigious Sanusi family, lives near Marsa Matruh.

The rajal saalih of al-Qasr, i.e. the local "holy man," is assured of status because he is an ashraf, one who claims descent from the family of the Prophet. He is also a
[561] member of the elder age-set, and while he is not rich, he cannot be considered poor. Though the "holy man" al-Sanusi
[793] lives near Matruh, he participates in the authority structure of al-Qasr and is a member of the "status group." He is sometimes referred to as rajal saalih kabir, "a great holy man," by virtue of his Sanusi heritage.

[771] The relative unimportance of this role as compared to that of the rajal khair in conflict regulation is a function

613 554 position as the leader of the bait. The principle of patrilineal succession is so respected in such baits that it overshadows any other consideration. This continues to be the case as long as the kinship ties within the bait remain strong. When the kinship ties in a given bait weaken, the principle of patrilineal succession also weakens. This is more likely to occur in baits where a relatively large number of the members leave the area permanently or for a more or less prolonged period of time, seeking jobs on a part or a full-time basis. Many of these members maintain only a minimal contact with their respective baits. They become more reluctant to fulfill their kinship obligations, especially when they entail any financial liability. The older members complain about how younger persons are less loyal to their elders and how selfish they have become. "All they care about is their jobs and the pleasure they get from the city; they are becoming city people." Younger members, on the other hand, maintain that their reluctance to fulfill their kinship obligations stems from their feeling that they do not get anything in return. "Life is expensive and money is hard to obtain. I cannot make enough money to support myself and my wife and children and at the same time pay my cousin's financial debts," said a member of eilat Asabei', who works as a driver with the Desert Organization in Alexandria.

When this happens, there seems to be a tendency toward shifting the emphasis from the bait to the eila or the amar as the source of the political support of the Aqila. This is turn makes wealth an important basis of the Aqila's power. No more can the bait impose an ineffective Aqila on the amar unless it is ready to back him by their own share of money. If this is lacking as was the case with Shei'eb, there is nothing

681 558 [684] The ten pounds paid to the husband in this case is considered as a kabara for the husband's injured pride. The kabara is one of the vaguest and least determined fines in the tribal law. As a face-saving device, it varies from one case to another. It is determined in each case by the seriousness of the insult, the publicity of that insult (insults in a public place require a much larger kabara than insults [561] in a private place). The relative age of the insulted and the offender is also taken into consideration in assessing the kabara. If the insulted is older than the offender, the kabara is much higher than if the situation were reversed. In fact, in the last case the insulted might [554] not be able to collect any kabara at all. The relative status of the two parties is also a factor. A member of a Murabiteen tribe who insults a Sa'adi is likely to be charged with a larger kabara than the reverse situation. The amount of kabara is left for the bargaining of the two parties and their representatives and varies greatly from one case to another. As such, the kabara is not exactly a fine or an independent punishment. In most of the cases it is an additional punishment added to a regular one. It is hard to imagine a crime in which the victim is not considered in one way or another insulted or belittled. The only 681 558 684 specified kabara that I found in the tribal law was in the case of adultery. The kabara in that case is the same regardless of the relative position of the people involved. The kabara differs, however, according to a standardized set of circumstances surrounding the place in which the adultery is committed. Adultery committed in the husband's tent requires kabara of the maximum L.E. 20; adultery within the camp of the husband but outside his tent can bring a kabara of only L.E. 10, while adultery committed outside the camp brings a mere L.E. 5. The justification for

4: Peters E-5 (1948-1950) 1970 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Cyrenaica

any summer camp will have descent lines cross linked by the bonds of marriage with parallel cousins, and at the same time cleaved by the maternal links established by repetitive cross-cousin marriage to different groups outside the segment. Thus, in one of its aspects, marriage makes of an agnatic group a group of cognates as well. 'Marry your paternal cousins and both your paternal and maternal relatives will be one,' to quote Bedouin sentiment on the matter. Within this agnatic group, nevertheless, two other clusters of kin exist—those with maternal connexions outside. In all, three areas of kinship can be defined,[13] although all the members of the segment will have the lineage bond of agnation in common. In normal circumstances, when split does not threaten the group, the bond of agnation, strengthened by parallel cousin marriage, takes precedence, although behaviour is significantly affected by maternal links at any time. There is, in the first instance, great jealousy between co-wives, which is passed on to their children. Each wife has her separate tent, and each is entitled to a strictly equal share of the husband's time they have in common. This applies similarly to favours he may grant his wives, and the distribution of his wealth among them. If, for example, the husband is the owner of a horse, he is required to tether it outside the tents of his wives in strict rotation; if he retires for the night with one wife, the following night he must favour the other; if he buys dress material for the one he must buy a length of identical material for the other; if he bestows favours on the children of one the children of the other must be given equal consideration. Many such details are meticulously observed; but while many are observed most of the time, it is difficult to observe them all, the whole time. Any breach of the rules is quickly taken up by the wives, and quarrels ensue, leading not only to bitterness among the co-wives, but between the offended wife and her husband, between the children of both wives, and between the children and their father. Often, when a man has co-wives, there is a marked discrepancy in age between them, for, when an elderly Bedouin marries a second

[13] The situation is not always as simple as this. Cross-cousin marriage may take more than two directions, and marriage within the segment might bring about great complexity, but the argument put forward above is not seriously affected by neglecting these details here.

4: Peters E-5 (1948-1950) 1970 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Cyrenaica

wife he usually chooses a young girl of about twenty years. Children of the elder wife might be adult, therefore, when the children of the junior wife are infants. Great emphasis is placed on seniority, particularly among males, but strong emphasis is also placed on the equality of siblings and their equal legal status. Between brothers of widely differing ages, there is, then, this field of potential conflict. From an early date competitive, if not hostile, relationships develop between the sons of co-wives. Competition between half-brothers results not only from their mothers being co-wives: one group might be the sons of a divorced wife. The latter situation is often much worse, for the sons born of the divorced wife are now being fostered by a woman who is not their mother. A similar condition of things is brought about when a widower with sons remarries. Yet again, when a wife grows old and her sons have reached maturity, her husband may not divorce her formally, but merely 'throw her off his back'; she will then go to live with her grown sons, while her husband, in turn, takes a new wife, usually taking up residence in another camp for a time at least. It would be too much of a digression here to discuss the inheritance disputes, and the disputes over marriage and bride-wealth, which arise out of these various circumstances. Suffice it to note that such disputes are common and affect the alignment of people within a tertiary segment.

As half-brothers grow to maturity some of them will marry their maternal cross-cousins, and in succeeding generations some of their descendants will do likewise. In this way, a tertiary segment united by the bond of agnation, will also have within it smaller groups of kin having different sets of cognatic links. This group, as a residential unit, shows a very high concentration of agnates, and the Bedouin say with pride that members of the camps are always 'one' because of this agnatic bond, and indeed, the corporate identity of this group is strikingly displayed in many circumstances. It does not take precedence in all circumstances, for, built into agnation, with the heavy burden of duties which go with it, are serious stresses and strains which in some circumstances regularly come out into the open. In yet other circumstances cognatic kinship affiliations appear to be dominant, causing friction among agnates. A man, for example, may permit

Cases

584 Prior to the wedding festivities, the
593 father will have participated in negotiations, although even in these he will have remained silent, leaving an affine, as a rule, to arrange the details with the girl's father and his kinsmen. The father feigns aloofness from the start of negotiations until after the wedding celebrations have ended. Before inquiring into this seemingly odd behaviour, a few further details of marriage ceremonies need to be mentioned briefly.

585 The bride is carried to the nuptial tent on a camel, seated in a cagelike
342 structure placed on the camel's back, this canopy covered over with carpets
[192] and at least one long blanket — later to be used to divide her tent into male and female quarters — which constitute part of the goods given to a woman
[788] on marriage. On her arrival, while she is still seated in her canopy, the camel is led round the tent seven times by a small boy. She then descends and is hustled into the tent by a number of women who make a show of their attempts to conceal her from view. Inside the tent the bride is enclosed in one corner in a kind of cubicle partitioned off by a length of blanket.

585 In the meantime, the groom has affected to escape, but is "caught," while
[533] running away, by his fellows, who "compel" him to return to the nuptial tent,
[831] to the accompaniment of their lewd songs telling of the sexual pleasures awaiting him. Much of this is horseplay, but the young men carry it out brazenly and the groom is required to show reluctance to continue with the ceremonies. His entry into the nuptial tent is marked by an expectant hush that falls over the crowd of men gathered, as they await the result of the virginity test the groom is about to perform, which he does by wrapping part of his toga round one of his fingers to pierce the hymen. Sharp shrieks from
[202] the bride give the signal that the test has been undertaken; not a stir moves the crowd until evidence of its success has been publicly displayed, which is given by the groom hoisting the blood-stained portion of the toga through the corner of the tent on a pole, followed by firing three shots from his rifle. Jubilantly, the men gathered fire volley after volley from their rifles just over the nuptial tent, and the seven-day celebrations begin.

585 A full descriptive account of a marriage, or many of the ritual details
589 woven into it need not be given here. What is included is intended to illus-
[593] trate certain relationships between father and son, and between one
[561] generation and another. In this connection two further points are appropriate. First, during the week of festival, young men gather outside the nuptial
[535] tent each night to encourage a maiden in her dancing, clapping their hands
[533] to the point of injury "so that we will have a wife soon." The celebrations belong to the bachelors, and they are the only ones to engage in the singing
[538] and hand clapping. It is they too who stop the bridal camel on its way to
[831] the nuptial tent to recite obscene rhymes to the bride, and they also shout their rather dubious consolations to the bride who, during the virginity test, crying out for her mother, is assured by them that the night holds promise
585 for her which her mother could never extend. The married men, particularly
602 the close senior agnates of the groom, stay away from it all, discussing mat-
521 ters unconnected with the affair.

membership of associations and so on. The statuses a Bedouin achieves depend not on an ordered acquisition through the inheritance of roles or election to them, but on his personal manipulation of linkages in his jockeying with others. Rites are minimal because there are few defined statuses an individual can predictably acquire. The equalitarianism of the desert denudes the Bedouin of ritual riches. Complimentarily, rites which do occur are thrown into exaggerated relief by the absence of others, and in their isolation, become not merely a "passage" but a cataclysmic change. Marriage and burial both comprehend limited fields of relations, but accompanying ceremonies may bring several hundred people together, people who otherwise rarely gather in these numbers to meet one another as kinsmen and neighbours, and it is suggested that the emphasis given to the events dramatises the significance of the changes they produce. In the discussion of the changes brought about by marriage, the Bedouin view of what is entailed will be considered first.

The Bedouin View of Marriage

After marriage, the Bedouin argue, a son has a tent of his own, a woman over whom he has authority and soon children to make him a father. Marriage causes split, branching. A new family is created, holding the potential of a new lineage. The separation is so painful a matter for the father that he cannot contemplate it, hence his pretence that he has no knowledge of wedding festivities, and his subsequent attitude that nothing has happened.

Interestingly, there are two other occasions when this attitude is to be observed. When a man kills within his corporate group,[5] he may flee his tribe or he may be compelled to leave; later he is likely to return and, when he does, he is received with a minimum of show. Every attempt is made to suppress knowledge of the event.

Again, if incest occurs, the memory of it must somehow be suppressed, and it is an ever-present danger. Men, permitted four wives simultaneously and also able to engage in a plurality of marriages through divorce or death of spouses, may have children showing an age difference of two or three generations. Thus it comes about that a man may be of an age in relation to his father's sister which permits them as children to behave as if they were first paternal cousins. As an adult, the preferred spouse for a man is a father's brother's daughter. In terms of relationships between adolescents the situation in which a man is of the same age generation as his father's sister is fraught with danger. In one such case, between a man and his father's sister, the male child of the union was put out in the desert to be

[5] Bedouin are disposed in groups which, in summer, usually constitute a single community, around or near a watering point. The men of this group are interlinked by reference to an ancestor four or five ascending generations, reckoning from the generation of men of about 20 years. When, elsewhere in this chapter reference is made to corporations, it will be to groups of this kind.

Cases

835 devoured by wild animals, the girl was "given"[6] to a close cousin who had
•561 shot his sister. Both now reside with an enemy tribal section. The two acts
684 were equated. They were similar to the extent that both created a situation which defied institutional resolution. The culprits were exorcised. The girl's lover remains with his group — the odium for the male is incomparably less than for the female, since, while maternity is easy to establish, paternity is frequently shrouded in doubt — and during the months I lived with this particular group, there was never a mention of the affair. It was as if "nothing had happened."

829 If asked why these two events cause such profound distress, the answers
578 the Bedouin give are twofold: they can do nothing about them, and they
613 cause split. By split in this context they mean split in the lineage; split in
[682] the case of homicide because it may lead to a demand for blood-money which
[684] is payable only between corporations, and split in the case of incest because it causes chaos in relationships. Marriage, in one sense, their reasoning
581 runs, is similar, for it too causes split. Whatever may be the analytic strength
829 of the arguments that homicide and incest precipitate splitting, the argu-
613 ment that marriage does so is spurious. In what sense can marriage mean split? Bedouin men marry "so that we may beget many sons, to make a big lineage later on." The worst fate that can befall a man as a result of his son's marriage is that he, in later generations, will become the focal point in a series of branching descent lines. The alternative — that his sons remain unmarried — can only mean that his name would disappear through want of successors to carry it on, which is one of the greatest evils which can befall a man, according to Bedouin sentiment: better split than oblivion. If the key to the interpretation of the father's attitude to his son's marriage is not
581 that it causes split, it must lie elsewhere in their relationship. What mar-
585 riage does is alter the distribution of authority between father and son. In
593 order to pursue this, it is necessary first to clarify the types of authority involved, and then assess them in a post-marital situation.

The Division of Authority Between the Family and the Corporation

554
851 Politically, a person's status is determined for him at birth. At this time a man has the right to accept or deny paternity. Denial is tantamount to an accusation of adultery by his wife. In practice, once a wife has given birth to a male child, whatever doubts people may harbour regarding paternity, the husband accepts the child as his. "The boy for the bed," is a saying often heard among the Bedouin; but it remains the husband's prerogative to invest the child with legitimacy, hence, political status. Only if a husband becomes
[837] aware that he is publicly considered a cuckold, or if he catches his wife and a lover *in flagrante delicto*, is he at all likely to take action. Otherwise he may

[585] [6] A marriage is illegal unless it is accompanied by an agreement to transfer wealth
[581] to the girl's father.

6: Peters E-5 (1948-1950) 1965 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Cyrenaica

band is required to take gifts to his mother-in-law in recognition of the fact that she nourished his wife as an infant (the literal meaning of the word used for this gift is "milk"). A return visit is made and gifts are given to the daughter. When the first child is born an animal is presented by the affines, and if the child is a male, the gift may be several sheep, or even a few camels if the father-in-law is very wealthy. Formal exchange of gifts continue, but, in addition, informal transfers are made. Moreover, if relations between a man and his father-in-law develop favourably, it is not uncommon for a young husband, during the early years of marriage, to move away from his father and pitch his tent alongside that of his father-in-law. Marriage gives a son affinal relations of his own. Affinity can alleviate the dead weight of paternal authority.

It is suggested that the crisis the marriage of a son assumes for a father is the shift it entails in the distribution of authority. This is borne out by other details in the marriage ceremony referred to earlier. Ordinarily, young men dare not sing within earshot of their senior agnates. Far from allowing obscenities, agnates of the ascending generation would not allow even a mention of women to be made by young men, in their presence. In a group consisting of young men and an agnate, I chanced to use the noun for woman and immediately my tent was cleared of all but the senior agnate. At a wedding the young men revel in their lewd songs and shout their obscenities for all to hear. The senior agnates stand aside and make a show of ignoring the proceedings. And well they may, for each marriage is a challenge to the exclusive authority they have enjoyed; each nuptial tent is an invasion of the domain of which they have been undisputed masters. Marriage is the only occasion when the men of one generation can clap and sing their defiance of an older one, and give warning of the changes which must be accommodated however great the pretence that nothing has happened.

Marriage ceremonies dramatise the clash between adjacent generations over the distribution of certain forms of authority. If this authority is as overwhelming as has been suggested, and if it is so deeply resented, how is it that life is endurable for juniors? Relationships between junior and senior agnates are so restrictive that they almost amount to what Professor Fortes has suggested I view as a form of avoidance relationships. Juniors must always defer, they must obey commands promptly, they serve their seniors, they must accept a lead when it is given and the restrictions on conversations exclude all reference to women, marriage or sex. These are not simply a set of general guides for behaviour, they are rigidly applied rules, deviation from which is countered with rebuke or greater severity. It would appear from this

---

many African societies is that wealth is transferred. Obviously, in societies where the rules of exogamy compel a dispersion of links outside a man's own clan, what is involved in this transfer of wealth cannot be sociologically similar to one in which marriage to the first cousin on either side is permitted.

Cases

561 602 561 602 621 [578] 582 582 585 578 [589] 582 [602]

that young men spend their premarital lives in an environment of unmitigated agnatic hostility. Greater substance is given to this view when it is realised that agnates live together. The residential concentration of agnates in Cyrenaica exceeds 80 per cent. I wish to stress that this figure is based on the universe of the small camp, and the only males included as agnates are those who are consanguinely related. Over 50 such camps were used in arriving at the figure. Obviously, the figure of agnatic concentration will vary depending on the universe. If all men who claim to belong to a tribe of, say, 15,000 souls, who claim that they are agnates in a political sense are included, then the figure will not be the same as that derived from a small group where the criterion for inclusion is consanguinity, not mere political affiliation. It is necessary to make this clear to emphasise that the Cyrenaican figure is unusually high, and also because the modes of behaviour between consanguineal and political agnates differ critically. Granted the hostility built into agnation, and recognising in addition the significance of the high degree of agnatic concentration, unless there are other factors present in the situation, life would be intolerably burdensome. Parallel-cousin marriage comes to the rescue.

Parallel-Cousin Marriage

Among the Bedouin the prohibited degrees of marriage are few. A man may not marry within a closer range than first paternal or maternal cousin; he cannot marry a woman of a senior generation, nor a woman known to be older. He cannot marry the daughters of a woman who has acted as wet nurse to him or to any of his brothers and sisters. Otherwise he is permitted to marry any other woman. Marriage with the first paternal cousin is preferred, and is more than a sentiment. A man has a right to his father's brother's daughter, and before a marriage is arranged with anyone else, the girl's father seeks the opinion of his brother's son. If he neglects to do this, or if he flouts the opinion offered him, he runs the risk of the marriage being brought to a halt on the very wedding day. I have witnessed this. In most of the records I possess, it usually happens that the brother's son is bought off with a few sheep (about five) and some articles of clothing. Here the brother's son was seizing the occasion to extort from a farmer's brother wealth which he considered was due him from an earlier inheritance dispute. Occasionally the intervention is genuinely designed to prevent a marriage; if the girl refuses to marry her father's brother's son, he can force her into spinsterhood. Men exercise their right to marry their first parallel cousins. They also marry other parallel cousins. The significance of parallel-cousin marriage varies with the exact degree of the relationship. First- and, say, third-parallel cousins are sociologically different in a number of respects, and in relation to specific problems these differences may assume major importance. In the present discussion the various degrees have this in common: that whatever the precise relationship, all parallel cousins are the

6: Peters E-5 (1948-1950) 1965 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Cyrenaica

in position immediately anyone else appears at the entrance to the tent.[11] Women cook, but they do not serve the meal to males, nor are they responsible for the distribution of meat among them. Parts of an animal are carefully specified, and the various portions distributed at a meal carry with them a great deal of significance. A host can honour, flatter, disappoint or even insult his guest, depending on the precise distribution of meat he adopts. Designated portions should go to certain kinsmen if they are present, but this still leaves a wide margin of choice, and a host can use this choice as part of the many means at his disposal for directing his relationships with other men. A political link can be forged or another snapped by the distribution of portions of meat at the commensal meal.

The Bedouin Ideal Type of Family as a Unit of Production

This account of the division of labour is far from inclusive of all the tasks carried out. The details given are only barely sufficient to provide some indication of the necessary composition of a family. Referring again to the Bedouin sentiments about the matter, it is now possible to give it some numerical precision. The number of females should be a minimum of about three, including a mother, a teen-age daughter and a child of about eight years. Males should number about six: a father, relieved of most chores to act as director; a son in his middle to late twenties, to plough; a second son, in his early to middle twenties, to herd the camels; a third, in his late teens to early twenties, to shepherd the sheep; a fourth, middle to late teens, to look after the goats; and a younger son to fetch, carry and run errands about the camp. The family of the ordinary Bedouin, they say, shows this sex and age distribution, although they recognise that a politically ambitious man with the wealth to match his aspirations would require more of both sexes — particularly women, since the burden of entertainment increases rapidly with a man's climb to power and fame.

Clearly, the basis of Bedouin sentiment concerning family structure is its approximation to an ideal production unit. Some families display the features of this ideal, but even they enjoy the productive benefits of this composition for a very limited period only. The family, as described above, can only be an ephemeral unit, since the age structure constantly changes, women are removed by marriage, men move away and death affects it at any point at any time. The Bedouin family is a fiction in the sense that it can be said to have a characteristic composition. The mistake they make is to conceive of it as a particular kinship structure related to production. The substance of what has been referred to as a fiction is that, if viewed as a productive unit, it bears close consistency with reality. Freed of the need to examine it in terms of specifically limited kinship relationships, and no longer anchored to the inhabitants of a single tent, the distribution of people according to sex and

[11] This is the general rule. In practice, the use of the divider can indicate an intimacy or distance in relationships, most subtly.